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March 11, 2026

Co-Chair Chris Swedzinski
Co-Chair Patty Acomb
House Energy Finance and Policy Committee
75 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: MFU support for net metering

Dear Co-Chair Swedzinski, Co-Chair Acomb, and members of the committee:

On behalf of Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU), I write to share our support for Minnesota's net metering law. Our members value how this policy allows them to invest in farm-scale renewable energy projects, helping them control costs, reduce emissions, and foster energy independence.

MFU is a grassroots organization that has represented Minnesota's family farmers, ranchers, and rural communities since 1918. Last year when changes to net metering were debated at the Capitol, we heard concerns from members who have invested on farm renewable energy system and this November, we debated this policy at our annual convention. Our members reaffirmed their support for net metering, highlighting how the policy helps make farms more resilient through investments in renewable energy.

This summer, we welcomed lawmakers to tour member farms that have net metered systems. One observation is that these installations are modest—a handful of panels on the edge of a field, solar on the face of a barn. We believe that the current system cap is reasonable and take issue with the idea that this generation is 'overbuilt.'

Broadly, we support policies that promote distributed, farmer-owned development of renewable energy projects. As demand for energy grows, we believe that more farm-scale development will not only help farmers control costs but also help improve resilience, replace off-peak power, and otherwise diversify our energy mix.

I appreciate your consideration and the opportunity to submit comment. We hope it informs your discussion. If you have any questions, please contact our Government Relations Director, Stu Lourey, at stu@mfu.org or (320) 232-2047 (C). Thank you for your work on behalf of farmers and all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Wertish". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "G" and a long, sweeping tail on the "h".

Gary Wertish
President, Minnesota Farmers Union



March 12, 2026
Minnesota House of Representatives - Energy Finance & Policy Committee
State Capitol 123
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55115

Dear Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for today's hearing. On behalf of the Environmental Working Group (EWG), I respectfully urge the Committee to critically examine both the narratives surrounding, and the facts of, Net Energy Metering ("NEM") in Minnesota in order to arrive at a true and independent evaluation.

As you discuss the future of Minnesota's energy landscape, you will likely hear claims that rooftop solar programs create a purported "cost shift," where non-solar ratepayers subsidize solar ratepayers. I am writing to dispute this claim and to reveal that it relies on an analysis of utility profits and losses, rather than the costs and benefits of these programs to all ratepayers, the electrical system, and to the state of Minnesota as a whole.

While it is understandable that the utilities are preoccupied with their own profits and losses, we believe the state of Minnesota must keep the public's interest front and center when deliberating something as essential as the future of clean energy.

Costs and Benefits To Whom?

The utility-invented "cost-shift" argument is based on a simple math equation: *Utility costs* (lost revenue) - *Utility benefits* (avoided wholesale expenditures).

It is next to impossible for programs designed to lower electricity consumption to pass the utility's cost-benefit test. That's because the utilities include in their "costs" lost revenues measured at retail rates and they include in their "benefits" avoided wholesale expenditures. It's virtually impossible for energy efficiency or any program that drives a consumer to buy less electricity from the grid to "pass" the test. This imbalance is what the utilities call a "cost shift."

When it comes to the future supplies of energy in Minnesota, the utility's cost benefit analysis is not the most important consideration. The most important consideration is whether encouraging a certain behavior - using electricity more efficiently through efficient appliances, for example, or generating and self-consuming electricity on-site from rooftop solar - is good for all ratepayers, the electrical system, and the state of Minnesota as a whole. Here, the "costs" and "benefits" are those incurred and accrued to a different audience than the utility themselves.

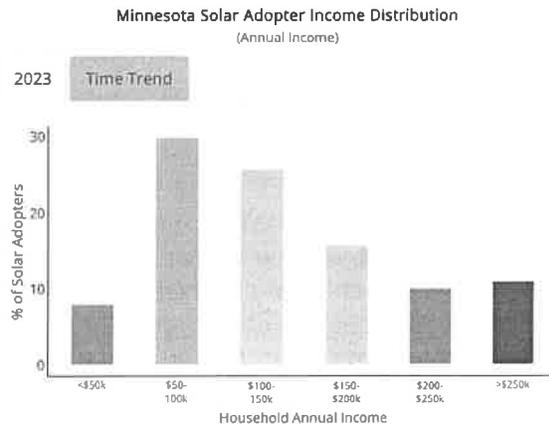


When analyzing true cost causation through a comprehensive lens, the data tells a different story:

- **Solar Customers Subsidize the Grid:** Recent studies demonstrate that distributed solar saves billions of dollars for all utility customers. A 2024 report by M. Cubed Consulting estimated that in California — the nation’s largest solar market — rooftop solar saved *all* ratepayers \$1.5 billion in a single year.
- **Avoided Infrastructure and Transmission Costs:** Electrons generated by local solar panels go to the nearest use point - typically the home immediately next door. Because the solar homeowner has already done the work of bringing the generation source close to the neighborhood, local solar projects mitigate the need for new, expensive infrastructure.
- **The "Departing Load" Misconception:** Utilities often claim that customers going solar takes away overall demand, leading to stranded costs. However, rooftop solar does not cause "departing load;" rather, it helps *avoid load growth* and is highly effective at shaving peak demand and reducing the need to call upon expensive market resources or peaker plants. At a time when Minnesota is grappling with the threat of data centers putting additional strain on the electric grid, the “departing load” myth is spurious.
- **The Core Issue is Utility Profit Structure:** High peak demand drives the need for grid expansion projects. Because investor-owned utilities directly profit from building more grid infrastructure, anything that lowers peak demand inherently lowers utility profits.

Rooftop Solar is a Working- and Middle-Class Investment

In addition to the false “cost shift” narrative, other common misconceptions about rooftop solar are outdated perceptions that the technology is a luxury reserved for the wealthy. Through the cost-shift narrative, utility interests are attempting to push non-utility-owned solar back into a "Whole Foods category"—a limited, boutique niche that poses no real threat to their monopoly. According to the Lawrence Berkeley National Lab Solar Demographics Tool (<https://emp.lbl.gov/solar-demographics-tool>), rooftop solar is a working- and middle-class investment. In 2023, 63% of





solar adopters had a family income under \$150,000, as seen in the chart. The largest market segment were families with a \$50,000-\$100,000 annual income.

- **Demographics of Energy Independence:** As accessibility to the technology continues to increase, and prices decline, adoption will continue to surge among those seeking practical relief to rising energy costs.
- **Protecting Energy Access for All:** Significantly reducing NEM credits or imposing punitive grid access fees does not protect low-income ratepayers. Instead, it restricts access to clean energy, ensuring that only the wealthiest individuals can afford to generate their own power. Preserving a strong NEM framework allows working families to maintain control over their energy costs rather than being locked into perpetual rate increases.

Conclusion: Prioritizing Consumer Access

Minnesota is a recognized leader in the transition to clean energy. To ensure this transition remains accessible and affordable, state policies must accurately reflect the true costs and benefits provided by distributed generation to the public and the public's interest at-large.

We respectfully urge the Committee to look closely at the data regarding grid benefits and reject policies based on incomplete "cost-shift" narratives that serve only to measure utility profits. By protecting NEM, Minnesota can encourage continued growth of local solar, foster grid resilience, and provide affordable energy solutions to working- and middle-class families.

Thank you for your time, service, and commitment to keeping Minnesota a clean energy leader.

Sincerely,

Bernadette Del Chiaro, Senior Vice President
Environmental Working Group (EWG)



117 South First Street • Montevideo, MN 56265

March 12, 2026

Chair Swedzinski
Chair Acomb
House Energy Finance and Policy Committee
Re: The Future of Net Metering

Chair Swedzinski, Chair Acomb, and Committee Members,

CURE is a rurally based non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and restoring resilient communities and landscapes by harnessing the power of the people who care. We appreciate the opportunity to submit information about the benefits of Minnesota's net metering program.

At CURE, we care deeply about rural electric cooperatives and have worked side by side with them to secure historic investments from the federal government. We have a sincere appreciation for our cooperatives' adherence to the seven cooperative principles, and the work our cooperatives do for their member-owners and our state. Cooperatives and municipal utilities are the best places for member-owners and constituents to achieve energy democracy and work together to produce and consume clean energy in community.

Under existing Minnesota law, customers of a municipal electrical utility or investor-owned utility and member-owners of an electric cooperative with their own interconnected solar panel systems can get credit on their electric bill for energy produced by their system and provided to the grid. Rooftop solar and other types of distributed generation provide countless benefits to individual adopters and the larger system, not all of which are included in estimates of the cost of electricity. Net metering supports the adoption of distributed generation, which, in addition to lowering household electric bills:

- promotes rural independence and home-grown energy;
- supports local economic development;
- improves grid resilience, especially when paired with battery storage; and
- lowers peak demand, reducing the need for larger, more costly system upgrades.

At a time when the cost of living is high and the need for clean energy is more urgent than ever, net metering is a meaningful way to address these concerns and deliver tangible benefits to member-owners and customers across the state. We look forward to a future in which Minnesota's net metering program remains strong and stable.

Sincerely,

/s/ Sarah Mooradian

Government Relations & Policy Director
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